



Red Blinds the Foolish est em

EXPLICIT
CONTENT

RED BLINDS THE FOOLISH • EST EM

Savage Passion

Rafita is the young, rising star of the bullfighting world known as "The Red Matador." He has never feared facing a bull since his first kill at the age of twelve. But when he falls in love with Mauro, a butcher who tends the bulls that Rafita kills, his confidence begins to waver. In the matador's dreams, Mauro (who, like a bull, is color-blind) is, alternately, the bull he faces in the ring and the butcher who carves up his own skewered corpse. Beautifully observed and drawn by est em, the author of *Seduce Me After the Show*, with a depth of style and passion, *Red Blinds the Foolish* depicts a complex relationship, and a cultural form, in a place where the sublime and the savage meet.



All of est em's work has an unmistakable grace, elegance, and depth. Her characters—be they dancers, butchers, fading punk stars, or bullfighters—are kind-hearted, yet sometimes cruel; ambitious, yet insecure; intelligent, yet often foolish. And they are all drop-dead gorgeous. Though I may be biased, I believe est em is to Boys' Love what Ursula K. LeGuin is to Science Fiction and Fantasy. She is not a good Boys' Love artist. She is a gifted storyteller who happens to tell stories about men in love.
—Matt Thorne

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Where Rising Authors Meet

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Red Blinds the Foolish
e p i s o d e 1



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THE THIRD AND SIXTH BULLS OF THE FIRST MADRID CORRIDA* OF THE SEASON CAME IN WITH BOTH EARS CUT OFF.



Why
"Red"?



You
haven't
seen him
yet?



Memo.

It's the
color of his
costume.



His poster
were
beautiful.
His photo
leg never
wavers.



I saw his
corridor on
TV last
week.



Quite
a fix.



My cousin
says he
drives all
over, from
Barcelona
to Sevilla,
to see his
corridos.

Rafael
Alonso.



He's
young.

What's
his
name?



They
call him
"The Red
Mascot."









As a nestpacking house in Lan Vargas.





...that a bull
cannot see
the red of
the mulets?

Yeah.
I'm the
same
way.

You're
color-blind?

My grand-
father was
the same.
It's
hereditary.

You
could say
I see them
as different
colors than
you do.

I have
trouble
telling
red from
green.

Did you
know,
Mazo...

On a bull,
the red seems
to deliver the
death blow in
a corral.

I fell
against an
iron fence
during a
fight years
ago.

Wish that
as a target,
you would
make an easy
opponent.

My grandfather
would probably
have said the
same thing. He
was crazy about
the corridos.

We had a
soulvenir muleta*
in our house,
and when I was
a kid we played
as the corrido.

Grandpa
always played
the muleta.
Pretty childish
of him, come to
think of it.

What'd old
somebody
dis?

Because
I am a
matador.

You're
like a bull.

A scarred
back and
color-blind.

Oh, yes.
There is
no more
beautiful
creature
than a bull.

Then why
do you
kill them?

Is that a
compliment?

Not you,
Sob.

Why?

Why
did you
change
your
color?

Diego,
could you
leave us
alone for a
moment?

Just for a
change of
pace.

I thought...

Well, as
long as he
performs well,
the color
doesn't
matter.

Did you
see Rafita
Alonso's new
costume?

But black?
It's not
very...
colorful.

So much
for his
nickname.

Going
to a
funeral?



But it
doesn't
look the
same,
does it?



...but
what's the
point if you
can't see
the color?



It's not
that I
can't
see it.



...you'd
be able
to see it
if it was
black.



That's
ridiculous.

What?



Reflex.



I want to
draw your
attention...

That
why?



You're
right.
It is
ridiculous.

A black and white manga panel showing two men in a close embrace. The man on the left is wearing a patterned jacket, and the man on the right is wearing a light-colored shirt. They are looking at each other with serious expressions.

The first time
I saw you in
Las Ventas
in May...

A black and white manga panel showing a close-up of a hand holding a dark, patterned cloth. The cloth has a subtle floral or geometric pattern.

...was
the first
time I ever
thought
red was a
beautiful
color.

Yes.

THAT DAY
IN MAY...

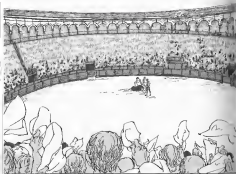
A black and white manga panel showing a man in a suit and tie holding a knife. He has a shocked or intense expression. Another man is visible in the background, looking on with a serious expression.

Maura!

The color
of blood
is red to
me, too.

A black and white manga panel showing two men in a close embrace. The man on the left is wearing a patterned jacket, and the man on the right is wearing a light-colored shirt. They are looking at each other with serious expressions.

Even if
it looks
different,
red is red.



...RED WAS
DEAD TO THAT
FLUTTERING
BIO.



...IT WASN'T
JUST THE
BULL...



*...for someday
you shall die...*

*...on the horns of
the bull.**

Red Blinds the Foolish
e p i s o d e 2



The Romani of Seville sing,



**Take care, matador...*





There was
more to
the song,
but I can't
remember
it.

But you're
a musician.
It's cooler to
be killed by a
bull than to
die in a car
accident.



Can you
grab my
phone for
me?



Thanks



The guitar
sing a song
like that?
I've never
heard it.



They
were
singing
it...



...outside
the building.





Don't
hang up.

UHH!

AH!

Misuro...

MAURO!

That's not
something
you say while
you're sleeping
with another
man.

Well then,
come to
Sevilla.

I'm going to
hang up now.
It's not
fair to the
other guy.

Not yet,
Misuro.

Don't
hang up.



It's just
that...
in my case,
I really have
no fear.

*"...someday you shall die
on the horns of the bull."*

*Be afraid, masador.
For if you are not..."*



BE AFRAID?
OF WHAT?



So does your
resolve account
for the fact
that you have
never been
scared by the
horn of a bull?



From the first day
I ever
killed a
bull.



I'll have
to check
it out
myself.



You were as
handsome
as ever.

No you didn't.



I went
straight to
the studio after
my long trip.
I had bags
under my eyes
and looked
like hell.

When
was that?



That
you're not
afraid to
face a
bull.



Is what
true?

Is it
true?



When
I was
twelve.



From the
scars.



When
did you
overcome
your
fear?



Yeah,
it's true.





Your first
love?



Where no
one could
see the
bullet.

Yes,
I would.

Would you
be sad
if I was
killed by
a bull?



Year.



You're not going to answer it?



Are you
all right?
You don't
look well.

No.
179
Maurice

Il bajei like
to wait
for me at
the hotel
after the
corridor.



if I die in
the ring
butcher me
instead of
the bull.

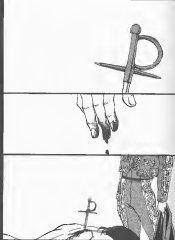
Cut it out.
For a
second,
I imagined
how I'd
do it.

I'd like to
see how
they

謝文耀

What?

I don't
want to
lose you.



A DREAM IN WHICH I
KILLED YOU.



MALRO, I HAD A DREAM.



Hss...



Hss...



The Roman of
Gervilla sing.



"Be afraid, matador.
For if you are not..."

MAURO...

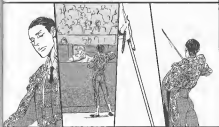


I'M AFRAID.



Red Blinds the Foolish
e p i s o d e 3





He hadn't
performed in
Las Vegas
for a while.
He was
nervous.

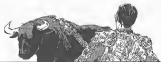
What the
hell was
wrong with
Rafta
Alonso?

He was
pale as
a ghost.

No, it
was a
bad bull.

Normally
he'd have
pulled it off.
He's tired.

Well,
it's better
than taking
a risk and
getting
gored!





Give me
my key.

Long
time no
see.



What's
wrong?
You look
pale.



I don't
want
to see
anyone
today.



But the
blood.

I'll clean
it myself.



If you hadn't,
you'd be
dead now,
gored straight
through the
heart.

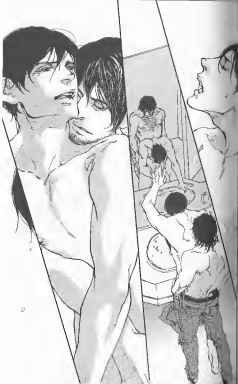


It's a
good
thing you
stopped
back.
Rafiki.



You made
a good call
in a tight
spot.







Perfect timing.
Can you
give me a
light?



!



What, no
ears for
Alonso
again?



I went
out to buy
cigarettes
and thought
I'd stop by.

You came
just to get
a light?



He started off
so silently.
He couldn't
keep that up
forever.



Yeah,
but this is
so sudden.



He's
young.
Everyone
has his
ups and
downs.



That must
be some
woman!
Ha ha ha.
Lucky guy.



If you
ask me,
there's
a woman
behind it.



Long way
to come
to buy
cigarettes.





Other times,
it's me
who's dead.



My back
feels so
hot.

The sensation
of the sand
and the warm blood
are so real.
I can't
forget them.

I see
someone's
feet,
so I must
be the bull.



Who
knows?

Is it the
dreams that
are causing
your slump?

All I
know
is...

...I'm
afraid to
stand in
the ring
now.



So I die
in your
dreams?



Sometimes.

My hands
are covered
in blood,
and there
you are,
collapse in
front of me.



The sword
is plunged
deep in
your back,
just where
your scar is.





You're
drunk.



Is it my
fault?



Don't
falter
yourself.



Ha ha
ha...



Ha ha
ha...



Raffa.



Answer
me.

Would
you kill
me?



And we
were to
face each
other in
the ring.

Let's say
it wasn't
a dream.
That I was
really a bull
and you the
matador.

Would
you kill
me?



That's
what I
wanted
to hear.



Yes,
I would
kill you.



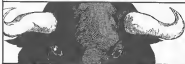
Because
I am a
matador.

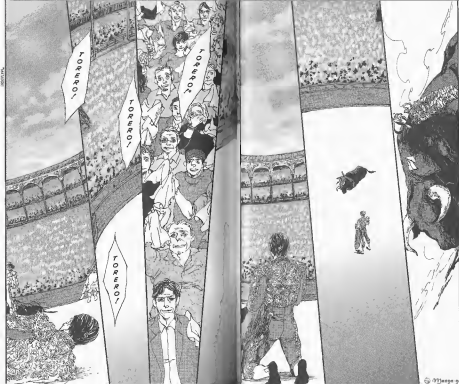


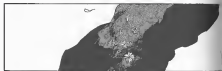














You really came!

Refika!



It's coming, but it's a hard delivery.

How's the call?



Hang in there, girl. You're almost there.



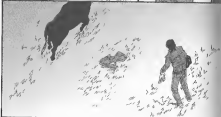
Close the window. You'll catch a cold.



No, the wind feels good.



What could be so important that we had to get up before dawn?







Corpse of the Round Table





How
is it?
I haven't
made it in
so long.

It's
delicious.



If living long
means giving
up good
food, I'd
rather not.

Like husband,
like wife.
Did said the
same thing
and got
cancer.

I probably
should have
made it less
spicy for you.



I wish I
could show
Pablo that
it still
fits me.

I dug
it out
of the
closet.

That dress
brings back
memories.

And you
used to say
you were
embarrassed
to wear a
bright red
dress.



Masao,
what are
you doing?

I'm dead.



I told you
not to let
him play on
the table!

Papa!
What have
you been
teaching
this boy?!



Is that so?
Then maybe
I'll save
you and
serve you
for dinner.

I'm one
bull,
so I have
to die.



I still can't believe it.

Papa never said a word about those debts when he was alive.

It's just Mama and me. An apartment is good enough.

You're going to sell this house, too?



Why should we pay back the debts to your good-for-nothing father raised up?



He said it's hard work, but you're young, so you'll do fine.

Your uncle says he can get you a job.

About that...



Huh?

Ha. That look on your face just now.

You looked just like Papa, what he was young.

It looks good on you.

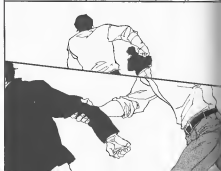


Ruzy man. He couldn't see the color red himself!...

...yet he said this was the best color for me.









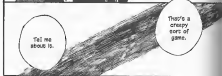




My performance of the moment of death was perfection.

For some reason, I was always the bull.

When I was small, I used to play at the corral.



Tell me about it.

That's a creepy sort of game.



But you know....



Playing dead is actually pretty fun.



I'm glad to have someone young helping out.



...but in a few days you won't even notice it.

The smell will bother you at first....

It's hard work, but you'll get used to it in no time.



My grandfather took me when I was a boy.

Do you follow the corrales?

So you're Pablo's grandson. He and my old man were in the same party.*



While he was in the hospital, I reported the results to him, so I remember most of the results for Las Ventas last year.

**BABY,
STAMP YOUR FOOT**



Lying
perfectly
still...

...and
waiting for
someone
to say
something
to you.





You like watching people wait for other people? I didn't know you were a voyeur.



My landlord was worried about the same thing. That's why he's kicking me out.



Why the hell have you been living in this dump anyway?



The view.



You should try it. Two, three hours fly by just like that.



The view from this window is fantastic.



You know what puzzles me?



What?



Why the floor hasn't collapsed.



Hey,
I've been
looking
for this
jacket



Well, the
closet's
just as
bad



Damn.



I told him to
keep those
books in his
shoes.



Sure, but
that's a
collective
copy



Can I
have it?
It was
published
when I
was five.



Is this
a first
edition of
your first
novel?

Yeah.



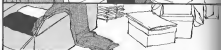
Oh, I'll
take care
of that.
You do the
closet.



I want to
classify the
books and
magazines
in here.



Classify?
This?
You're
joking,
right?



Good
night.

OK.



Red
shoes,
right?



Shanghai
Dish

and
some
steaming
rice.



What
shoes?

The
ones
you
ordered

Oh, yeah.
About the
shoes.



Where
do you
live?

Right
here.
I've got
an early
morning
delivery.

They'll be done
next week.
Do you want
to come by
the shop, or
should I bring
them over?

Can you
bring them
over?



Nice.



They feel great.



Thanks.



Say...



I'll take a look.



The sandals, maybe?



From when?

Have you got a cutting of women's shoes?



Where?

Old shoes...

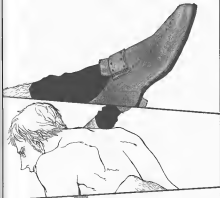


I'll take a cup.



I can't concentrate. I'm gonna have some coffee.







It's none of my business, but it's been driving me crazy all week and I just had to know!

I found them the other day.

Seen... what's did you...?

Your closet.

Whose are these?

Mine.



Whe-?



What are you doing?!





The next day,
I started
washing
my own
underwear.

For me,
it was the
day I could
no longer
wear those
shoes.



Overnight,
I became
popular with
girls.

So you
made
the right
choice.

It was
hell.

...and I
cut my
long hair
short.



Let's
say...

Roy.

...you had
a pair of
high heels
that fit.



MOM, THEY DON'T FIT ANYMORE.

Roy...



I DON'T HAVE ANY SHOES
THAT ARE BIGGER.



Do you
remember
the day you
became an
adult?



No,
that's
not what
I meant.

You mean
the first
time I
had sex?



Tiempos extra

The brawl resulted in numerous arrests as well as an interruption in the game.

Today's *Liberta Madrid* game was marred by a brawl that broke out among fans.

Yeah, I *did* punch somebody. The guy badmouthed my little brother.

I was just trying to stop the fight. Dumb idea.

Oscar is a famous passionate supporter of the team who has often drawn the attention of the media.

Among those arrested was Oscar Ventura, the older brother of *Liberta Madrid*'s Miguel Ventura.

Huh? No, I can't tell you what the guy said.

You don't have to wear them. Just keep them in your closet.

Isn't it you who said that shoes that aren't worn have no value?

Just get over here and help.

I don't know what to do with your things.

Tiempos
extra



'Cause my
mother
taught me
never to
use foul
language,
that's why.



In other
words...

Miguel Versura
has not
commented on
the incident.

Shut up
and get off
my back,
faggot!

Didn't I
just say
I'm not
gonna
tell you?



Yeah.
Some idiot
made a racket
behind the
goal.

You know
about the
brawl the other
day that ended
with some
people being
arrested?

I've been
banned.

I was
one of
the ones
arrested.
Can you
believe it?



You're an
idiot, too,
aren't you?

Almost
forgot.



Two of 'em!
Carrying huge
clubs! Well,
I did punch
the younger
guard.

I just got
caught in
the middle!
Then security
shows up and
grabs me.



Thirteen
minutes into
the second half,
and Liberté
Madrid has
turned the
game around!

GOAL!
Miguel
Ventura's
second
goal of
the game!



Why
aren't you
at the
game?

Wen?
Was a
second.



Ha?

I'm not
siding
you, to.

I'm not
going to
apologize.

I don't
know you
were Miguel
Ventura's
brother.

I'll help you
solve things
peacefully.

If you two want
to get to know
each other better,
that's great, but
if you wanna fight,
take it outside.

Here.

Hold
on.

You were
on the
news.

What.
It's him.

What?

He's
coming
this way.

Beer.



Why are
you just
standing
there?!

Yo!

Hey

Here.

Ow!

Wow.
You
suck.

GOAL!

Yo!

Yo!









That's
not what I
meant when
I told you
I was in a
good mood.
/snort!



Forbes is
Did you see
Miguel's goal?

No.

Sorry.



Huh?!

Men, your job
is the worst.
You're here in the
stadium, but you can't
switch the game.

I wish you
instead.



I said,
cut it
out!

Cut it
out!

What?



Sorry I
slugged
you.



Whoa.
No more
"getting
even."
I'm not...
like you.



Oh,
but you
could be.



The hell
I could.



Your tattoo
of Nike
stands out.
I memorized
your face
right away.



I've been
watching
you all
along.

I can tell what's
happening just
by watching the
change in your
expression.

I don't
have to
watch the
field.



When the brain
picks out:
I tried to pull
you to safety.



Why
didn't
you say
so?!



J a m e s



Shit!
The
second
half!

You should
quit your
security
job.

Run
faster!



The thing to
wear to the
stadium is a
game jersey.



I'll get you
one signed
by Miguel
Ventura.



I managed to
find my seat, but
before I could
even catch my
breath, the
dark sounded
and the lights
went down.



The ruckus
audience
suddenly fell
silent.



A theater
performance is
the same in any
country. There
is a silence that
comes even the
billion on the
other side of
the curtain.



The curtain
rose quietly,
along with
the music.



I asked the
cab driver how
much longer.
He responded
with a shrug
and a frown.



With no
other choice,
I headed the
driver the fare
on the meter
and a bit
more...



...exited the
cab, and ran,
dodging the
cars and
pedestrians.



The heat of the
theater, minutes
before curtain time,
beats the winter chill
outside. The faces
in the audience
seemed to beam
with anticipation.





And no
doubt tears
in more
than a few.

There was
rapture in
some eyes,
wonder in
others.



But what I felt
was something
closer to fear.



Jorge
Conella.
A young
man of
twenty.



Discussion?



He
leaped
high and
lightly...



...his
body like
a bow.

His landings
were virtually
silent.



This audience
was awed; their
eyes fixed on
him as if they
had forgotten
how to blink.

Right
there.

Nh...

This is what
lost me
that pers.
I've got to
get back in
the game
quick.

No.
It's a lot
better.

Does
it still
hurt?

Ahhhh!
No, that
tickles.

Just don't
overdo it.
How about
your legs?

If you're
going to
do it,
put your
heart
in it.

You're a
strange
bird.

It's fun...

How 'bout
a massage?

I can't make
a living writing
fiction, so I
was planning
to look for a
job anyway.

I also help
take care of
him.

Yeah.
For an old
man who's
mostly been
ridden.

Where on
earth did
you find
a job like
that?

A friend
introduced
me.



Determined
to have him
join my own
company...

...I waited
for the
performance
to end and
went to the
green room.



His dressing
room was
beyond a row
of others...



...and when
I arrived, it
was already
thronged
with people



A charac-
tergrapher.

The old
man's
novel.

Who's the
protagonist?

As in
belles?

Or
was?

Yeah.
That's
why it's
fun.



That's
not true.

But
you're not
interested.

Since you
rarely talk
to me about
belles.



Who was
it who was
cracking jokes
about men in
suits?



Idios.

Oh,
you look
quite sexy
in suits.

When I wasn't sleeping or eating and sometimes I even forgot to do that, I was absorbed in preparing his performance.

The first few months after he arrived were like a war.

Naturally, he spoke no French and barely understood English.

Through gestures, conveyed that I wanted him to contact me, and he nodded.

I'm going to bed.

Boone must.

As I choreographed...

...we moved together and shouted at one another.

Time for my medicine. Let's take a break.





It's an
old scar,
it's all right
to scrub
it hard.

It's from
back
surgery.
Quite a
serious
surgery,
at that.



That's the
thing that
kept me from
becoming a
dancer.

But that
was a
long time
ago.



That
would
take too
long.

I'll do it
myself.

I heated
some water.
Let's give
you a bath.



Yes,
like that.

Hold out
your arm.

How nice.
Like a
dancer's
body.
Now your
back...





I thought
it would
have a
happy
ending.

Why are
you crying?
It's just a
made-up
story.

Oh,
it *is* a
happy
ending.

You
haven't
told me
the *Ellie*
yet.

"Lumina."

As the end of
November, he
disappeared
forever.

I stood
alone on
the stage
A stage
without him.

The lights
were
blinding.

And
that's
the end

Red Blinds the Foolish

AFTERWORD



Bonne
nuit.

I'll leave
the light
on.

THE END

